

# Best & Worst Buys

(Continued from previous page)

drain rice fields."

**Jay Volk, Arlington, Neb.:** "I've worked this truck like a tractor but it still rides like a car," reports Jay, impressed with his 1978 Dodge extended cab 4-WD pickup. "We

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blew out the engine hauling hay so I overhauled it, as well as the transmission and transfer case. I wouldn't trade it for a new one."

**L. Jerry Lee, Greensburg, Ind.:** "My 1990 Ford 1720 rototiller is my best buy. It does everything I ask it to.

"My 1992 Yardman 18 hp riding mower is a worst buy. I couldn't keep it running long enough to even finish mowing my yard. The dealer couldn't find the problem."

**Robert B. Sharp, Bashaw, Alberta:** "Our 1988 Ford 1220 15 hp diesel garden tractor is our best buy. We use it to move and operate our 8-in. dia., 50-ft. long grain auger because it's so easy to maneuver. It has a lot more power than any of the gas tractors we used in the past. The 3-pt. hitch lets us use it on various makes of mowers, rototillers, and blades.

"My Skil 2305 rechargeable screwdriver is a best buy. I'm getting so lazy that I won't put in a screw or tighten a hose clamp without it. I've retired most of my screwdrivers to pry bar heaven."

Robert says his Australian-designed **Computerspray** is a "worst buy". "It has some excellent features - ground-driven pump, manual fold booms, and a tank that's designed for easy clean out. However, it's poorly made and has broken in places due to design problems. To put it into transport position, I have to crawl underneath it and remove the drive chain. It's nerve wracking because I never know if it's going to finish a field before it quits working."

**Willard Donahay, Utica, Ohio:** Willard's pleased with his three **Wheel Horse** riding mowers. "Two are 16 years old and one is 6 years old.

"My 1978 Ford 3/4-ton 4-WD truck has 149,000 miles with no problems. I've never touched the engine. It runs good and doesn't use any oil."

**C. Tim Bishop, Queenstown, Md.:** "My 1993 GM 2500 2-WD Suburban with a 454 cu. in. engine is my best buy. I installed a set of Thorley headers equipped with a Walker Super Turbocharger muffler and a reprogrammed Hypertech computer chip. I got 11 to 12 mpg towing a 24-ft. race car trailer and 15 mpg without the trailer while hauling 7 passengers or 30 bags of seed corn. It'll pass up anything on the road and has the style and comfort of a luxury automobile. It also has great resale value. However, I wish it had remote electric door locks and heated side mirrors.

"My 1993 Deere 7200 6-row, 30-in. vacuum planter is equipped with Yetter residue managers. It's easy to adjust and plants accurately. Last year I had my best

stand of no-till corn ever.

"My Deere 9500 combine is equipped with Pixall snapping rolls that eliminate the need to chop corn stalks (Pixall Mfg., Clear Lake, Wis. 54005). The rolls have 10 sharpened, chrome-plated knife blades that intermesh to grip corn stalks and weeds, pulling them down through the snapper plates and crimping them for faster decomposition. We use a Deere 750 no-till drill to plant no-till soybeans in untouched corn stalks the following year. Both the combine and drill do an excellent job and have good resale value."

**John Pierskalla, St. Cloud, Minn.:** "Two years ago I bought a Sears Craftsman circular saw for \$75. It's an expensive piece of junk. I didn't even get to use it long enough to sharpen the blade before a short developed in the armature. The company wants \$59 to repair it. It's more than a year old so it's no longer covered by warranty."

**Richard A. Roth, Morton, Ill.:** "It has more than 70,000 miles on it with only routine maintenance and doesn't use any oil," says Richard, pleased with his 1985 Chevrolet 4-WD pickup.

**Merl Godfrey, Pefferlaw, Ontario:** "My 1993 Husqvarna chainsaw equipped with a 20-in. bar is my best buy. It always starts right up, even after it sits for a long time. Cuts great and is vibration-free. I don't get any 'dead hand' feeling with this saw at all."

**James F. Dougherty, Lake City, Iowa:** "My 1992 Chevrolet 2500 heavy duty 4-WD pickup rides and handles like a car. No problems. It's a pleasure to drive."

**Robert J. Brown, Vineland, N.J.:** "Our best buy of all time is a 1950 Ford 8N tractor. My father purchased it new so I grew up with it. I still use it on my farm today. It's semi-retired but can still pull in a day's work when it has to. I let my Deere 4030 tractor do the heavy work."

**Frank Hunter, Lumby, B.C.:** "I bought a 1979 Versatile 155 tractor used three years ago and it's my best buy. It's a great all-around tractor. I bought it equipped with a log grapple which is worth its weight in gold. I use it to move pallets, round bales, lumber, logs, and machinery."

**Tim Stanton, Feura Bush, N.Y.:** "I like my Hesston 12-wheel bi-fold rake. It does a good job and can cover 15 to 20 acres per hour without damaging hay. My only complaint is that it folds manually. Newer models fold hydraulically.

"We've had problems with **Kory** 8-ton wide track running gears mounted on two wagons. The spindles and main rear beams on both wagons bent the first year, and two front spindles broke the second year. We've used six different brands of running gears over the past 10 years with fewer problems than we've had with these in just two years."

**Earl Zeltwangen, Wyatt, Ind.:** Earl nominates his new Chevrolet S-10 4-WD extended cab pickup as "best buy". "It runs smooth, is easy on fuel, and the 4-WD works good. I really like it.

"We extended our shop with a 50-ft. Butler all-steel building and like it a lot. It's completely insulated. We also installed a Shenandoah waste oil burning heater that works good. I'm a dealer for it."

**Stanley Greathouse, Johnsonville, Ill.:** "My best buy is my 1994 Lincoln Town

Car. I've also owned 1992, 1990, and 1986 models. All of them were comfortable, trouble-free, and fuel efficient.

"My Case-IH 3594 tractor equipped with front wheel assist is a best buy. It has a lot of power and has been trouble-free."

**Francis Burch, Lester Prairie, Minn.:** He's happy with his 1993 Deere 7600 diesel tractor. "I like the roomy cab. It has a lot of window area which provides great visibility. The 3-pt. is easy to use, and the tractor is easy to service and refuel. I was unhappy with how the transmission shifted at first, but an update kit greatly improved it."

**Lacy Hurlocker, Mt. Pleasant, N.C.:** "Our 1990 Deere AMT 600 is a best buy. My wife and I use it every day. No problems so far. I wouldn't want to farm without it."

**Richard Arnsman, Payson, Ill.:** "I'm well-satisfied with my 1992 Case-IH 7120 tractor equipped with front wheel assist. It has a lot of power and traction, a quiet cab, convenient controls, and an 18-speed powershift transmission that makes it a pleasure to operate.

"I like my 1991 Deere 9500 combine with rear wheel assist. It walks right through soft fields where others would bog down and has the power and capacity to handle high yielding crops fast and efficiently. It can be adjusted to save more grain than any other combine I've ever used."

**George T. Wilson, Brusett, Mont.:** "My 1989 Versatile 276 Bi-Directional tractor is a best buy. The hydrostatic 4-WD has superb traction and it's articulated so I can get into tight places. The loader is the best I've ever used. The engine starts well in winter."

**Luke Verbyla, Benton, Penn.:** Luke's pleased with his Rock-O-Matic 57 rock picker, which he bought used. "It's a tough machine - no problems in five years. It cost less than a hernia operation and is always ready to work. My brother's also pleased with his Rock-O-Matic.

"We've had trouble with our 1991 New Holland 553 skid steer loader. The cab is so small it must have been made for a midget, and the muffler broke with only 90 hours on the machine. Hydraulic oil started leaking at 400 hours. It has poor traction when it's not on concrete. I had owned a New Holland L-35 model which I liked much better."

**Jerry Kroll, Montague, Mich.:** "My

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1992 Deere F-510 front-mount mower is a pleasure to operate, has plenty of power, and is maneuverable. It does a perfect job mowing. All components are easy to reach and service. No problems at all.

"My 1992 Automatic ATF-600 roller mill works fast and does a nice job. Last fall I used it to crack shelled corn which I then discharged into a silo blower. I was able to keep up with our Massey-Ferguson 550 combine which is also a best buy."

**Arthur L. Lang, DuBois, Neb.:** Arthur's impressed with his 1992 Chevrolet extended cab 4-WD pickup. "It rides better than any other truck I've ever owned. It has lots of room and is easy on fuel."

**Tom Dent, Oak Grove, Mo.:** "I like my Clark-Melroe Bobcat 743 and 440B

skidsteer loaders. They're tougher than a box of rocks and can do more work than a herd of horses."

On the "worst buy" side, Tom lists his Milwaukee 1/2 hp hammer drill. "Whenever I get it hung up it almost always strips the gears. Repairs are expensive."

**Cliff Wetzel, Ithaca, Mich.:** Cliff's had trouble with his 1989 Dodge Ram 4-WD diesel pickup. "I drove less than 150 miles before the fan belt failed because the air conditioner had been improperly installed. A few thousand miles later the air conditioner wiring caught on fire. Apparently, the wiring was installed on the wrong side of the steering column and pulled tight against the clutch rod which wore through the insulation. There was no warranty on electrical components. The repair bill was more than \$500.

"Next, I was driving on the highway when I detected an odd noise and looked out my mirror to see that the rear wheel and axle had slipped beyond the wheel fender. That cost me another \$300 for towing, parts, and labor. I've also had trouble with the fuel tank when it gets down to about 1/3 full. The truck nearly stalled on a long uphill grade and I had to bleed the fuel line. The tank is flat, over 5 ft. long and the fuel line is 2 in. above the bottom of the tank at the center. When going uphill, fuel flows to the back of the tank.

"I called the company and spoke with the truck manager. He told me that I was the only person to ever complain about this problem. If I was the only person to ever complain, then why was the shape of the tank changed on the 1990 model to solve the very problem I complained about?

"The next problem occurred when I was 150 miles from home - the transmission gave out. I hauled the truck back home, removed the transmission, and took it to a repair shop. When I returned home, I received a call from the shop owner who told me that Dodge didn't sell any transmission parts for its 1988 or 1989 model pickups. The dealer called Detroit and got the same answer. We were told, however, that we could buy a new transmission for \$2,800. We only needed a small part, but we couldn't get it. When I bought the pickup, neither the dealer nor the company told me that I wouldn't be able to buy a part for the transmission if I should ever need it.

"I received a followup call later from the company saying that Dodge had started selling transmission parts for 1988-89 trucks. But the fact remains that this has been one expensive lemon of a truck. Except for the Cummins engine, it has not performed well at all."

**Walter Fifelski, Wayland, Mich.:** "My worst buy is a 1993 M.T.D. riding mower with an 18 hp Briggs & Stratton gas engine. I used it for only about 20 hours last year. When I started it this spring the engine had a terrible knock. I thought the problem was a bad bearing so I took it to an authorized service center. They told me the problem was due to carbon buildup on the piston and head and that if the carbon wasn't removed, considerable damage would occur. Scraping the carbon off cost me \$150. I was told by the service center that neither M.T.D. nor Briggs & Stratton would pay for the repair. They said the problem is that heads on late model Briggs & Stratton engines have such close tolerance that even the smallest amount of carbon will cause the piston to 'hammer'. I've owned almost every kind of gas engine ever made and this is the first time I've ever heard of this problem."